

Lesson Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Lesson ID: 92559-39961

Title: COMBAT IMAGE

Operation/Exercise Name: MARFOR PROMOTE LIBERTY Observed: 13 Jun 1990

Originator: COMMARFOR PANAMA

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5. (U) OBSERVATION:

Full combat battle dress and cammie paint may project the wrong impressions in low intensity conflict (LIC).

6. (U) DISCUSSION:

Several months after Operation JUST CAUSE, a United States (U.S.) Army unit was assigned a presence mission in one of the outlying towns. The object of the presence mission includes, but not limited to: joint patrols in town with the Panamanian National Police (PNP), civil affairs projects, and motorized patrols on the outskirts of town; all done low keyed and with the full knowledge of the local civilian government. The unit came into town in full combat regalia, helmets, flak jackets, cammie paint, etc... , without notifying the local government. The local citizens had every reason to believe that combat may have resumed.

7. (U) LESSON LEARNED:

In a low intensity conflict (LIC) environment, image and perceived images are very important.

8. (U) RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Commanders should pay particular attention to the image they are creating. It is easy to be a sharp, alert, armed Marine without looking like you are about to assault the area.

9. (U) COMMENTS:

None stated.
